

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jun 16th 2024

There are times when it is necessary to "sleep," that is, to know how to wait, to keep calm, and to sit and contemplate in amazement the seed that sprouts and grows by itself. The fruits will undoubtedly go beyond all expectations. Whoever is not convinced of this does not have faith in the prodigious power of Christ's word.

Today's parable is addressed to those who announce the word of God. Mark the evangelist must have been seeing the disappointments and frustrations on the faces of preachers of the Gospel in his community. In spite of all the good efforts they have put in announcing the message of Jesus, the rulers continued to persecute the Christians. Naturally the preachers are disappointed. Mark wants to encourage them and recalls the two parables of Jesus.

Through the parable of the seed sown by the farmer, Jesus wants to emphasise the role of God in the whole process of preaching the Gospel – i.e., sowing the seed and establishing the Kingdom. Role of the preacher is only minimum – Just preach the Word! The rest of the work which happens in the hearts, in the lives of people, is the work of God.

When and how would the listener respond the Word should not be the concern of the preacher. His job is only to preach the Word of God. Rest is God's work.

The evangelist tells of a man who sows the seed - he joyfully and unsparingly scatters the precious grains everywhere. This is how the Gospel message must be spread, in abundance, not in a defined and restricted field, but everywhere, in the whole world. This is an invitation to overcome any exclusivism; no one should consider God's blessings are reserved for them alone.

After the sowing season comes the moment when the farmer sleeps and watches. It is useless for him to get restless, or worry; the process underway now no longer depends on him; if he gets restless if he enters the field, he only causes trouble, he tramples and damages the tender shoots. All he must do is to wait. In fact, in silence the miracle begins, the seed sprouts from the earth.

The assimilation of the Gospel message is not immediate; the work of a person's inner transformation requires days and years. However, once it has penetrated the heart, the word of Christ sets in motion an unstoppable dynamism, even if slow. Those who have heard it never remain the same.

Mark reminds the leaders of his community and also today's faithful not to be discouraged even if no immediate result is noticed. A model preacher is St. Paul, who declared to the Corinthians, "I planted, Apollos watered, but it is God who made it grow" (1 Cor 3:6).